DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 178 113 JC 790 513

AUTHOR Albert, Louis S.; Watson, Rollin J.
TITLE "Mainstreaming" the Part-Time Faculty: Issue or Imperative?
PUB DATE [78]
NOTE 14p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Policy; *Administrative Problems; College Faculty; Community Colleges; Effective Teaching; Full Time Faculty; *Junior Colleges; *Legal Problems; *Part Time Teachers; Part Time Teaching; *Personnel Policy; *Teacher Administrator Relationship; Teacher Associations

ABSTRACT

Controversy over the widespread use of part-time faculty, as well as related legal and administrative problems, calls for a mainstreaming of part-time faculty into the academic process of an institution. Faculty unions claim increased utilization of part-time instructors undermines full-time faculty benefits and exploits part-time teachers. Administrators cite budgetary advantages and the flexibility provided by part-time help. They must also deal, however, with the legal problems of tenure and contractual rights and obligations between an institution and its part-time faculty. Colleges should redefine part-time faculty policies and subscribe to a "fairness doctrine" for hiring which eliminates past abuses, provides for due process in case of termination, and explains tenure policy. Administrators can then concentrate on the effective utilization of part-time instructors in improving service to students and increasing student retention. This can be achieved through a mainstreaming plan developed at Essex Community College which (1) obtains data on part-time instructors, (2) seeks the involvement of faculty and staff, (3) provides orientation and follow-up for part-time faculty, (4) creates interaction between full-time and part-time teachers, and (5) provides on-going support for part-time faculty. (JP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED178113

"MAINSTREAMING" THE PART-TIME FACULTY: ISSUE OR IMPERATIVE?

Louis S. Albert

Rollin J. Watson

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Rollin J. Watson

Louis S. Albert

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

JC 790 513

"Mainstreaming" The Part-Time Faculty: Issue or Imperative?

*Louis S. Albert
*Rollin J. Watson

The utilization of part-time faculty is one of the most potentially volatile issues in higher education today because of the inherent conflict between the obligation of institutions to provide high quality learning environments and the need to operate within present day financial constraints. As college enrollments decline and budgets tighten, both faculty members and administrators are scrutinizing part-time employment practices more carefully. The debate is not just over the question of whether a part-time faculty is a cushion against retrenchment, as some administrators claim, or whether hiring part timers is a way to avoid the expense of full time positions, as some faculty members contend. The practice of employing part-time teachers has direct impact upon the overall quality and effectiveness of the educational process.

Some of the significant questions that must begin to be answered are: what are the emerging legal issues regarding part-time faculty and how can they be dealt with? What effect are part-time faculties having on student learning? How are we going to make the best possible use of the part-time faculty under current financial constraints?

The answer to the last of these questions is to be found in attempts to "mainstream" the part-time faculty -- to better integrate it into the processes of an institution. This paper discusses the scope of part-time utilization and legal and associated administrative issues as a prelude to a proposal that the effectiveness of part-time instructors be increased by making them an integral part of the academic effort of a college.

Scope of Part-Time Faculty Utilization

When some career oriented baccalaureate institutions developed in the post-war era, using 90% part-time instruction, or when the faculties of extension

*Mr. Albert is Dean of Instruction at Essex Community College
*Dr. Watson is Associate Dean of Instruction, Continuing Education and Community Services at the same institution.

operations of state universities were primarily part-time, few administrators or full-time faculty members seemed to be concerned. During the period of rapid growth of community colleges, administrators and full-time faculty members looked upon the use of part-time faculty as beneficial to them; many of them "moonlighted" as part-time instructors themselves, and the presence of a large part-time faculty indicated that there was plenty of work available. Today, wide-spread use of part-time faculty is viewed with concern by both administrators and faculty. Employment of part-time faculty seems to correlate in many institutions with continuing education, which is one of the only significant growth areas in higher education today, and is most visible at giant extension operations, like that of Coast Community College in California, where an entire faculty is part-time.[1]

Increasing utilization of part-time faculty in growing institutions attempting to compensate for their inability to generate sufficient budgetary support for additional full-time faculty has led to considerable criticism of the trend on pedagogical, financial and legal levels. The American Association of University Professors and the American Federation of Teachers are alarmed by what they call a "dramatic rise" in the use of part-time faculty. The unions denounce the over-employment of part-timers because their use exploits those who teach part-time and it also undermines salaries and benefits of full-time faculty members.[2] The A.A.U.P. also contends that part-time faculty members are generally less qualified, offer few non-teaching services, and do not contribute to the institution's reputation.[3]

One author suggested that the desire of some part-time faculty members to achieve tenure has created a competition between part and full-timers which works in favor of administrations and boards of trustees.[4]

In spite of these negative aspects of part-time faculty employment, institutions are increasing their utilization of part-time faculty for the following reasons:

1. The per-course rate of pay is lower for part-time faculty than of full-time faculty.
2. Part-time faculty receive no fringe benefits.
3. Minimal office space is required.
4. Part-time faculty can be hired on a course-by-course basis with no long-term commitments.
5. Part-time teachers provide great flexibility in providing instruction in emerging disciplines.

There is some disagreement over whether part-time faculty members are underpaid in comparison with full-time instructors. The American Federation of Teachers claimed that part-time and adjunct-faculty members are often paid at rates "ranging down to one-third or less of established salaries scales,"[5] but a study done for the A.A.U.P. showed that when adjustments are made to reflect time spent on non-teaching duties of full-time faculty members, parity in part-time and full-time pay is apparent.[6] Of course, the question of what constitutes "full-time" status has never been completely answered. Definition is more to the advantage of the faculty member now, in a time of retrenchment, than it was at a time previous when outside sources of income were plentiful. At that time, it was the administrators who were calling for clearer definitions of what constituted "full-time status."[7]

Legal and Associated Administrative Issues

Because of the pressure being exerted on both sides of the question of the use of part-time faculty, some disruptive legal issues seem to be appearing,

and the question of tenure is, perhaps, the most critical of these issues. The California Court of Appeals handed down a landmark decision last year in a suit by the Peralta Federation of Teachers, Local 1603 vs. the Peralta Community College District. Twelve part-time teachers employed by the Peralta Community College District sought writ of mandate to grant them tenure and to compensate them at a rate equivalent to full-time faculty. The court ruled that those instructors who carried 60 percent or more of a full-time load could be eligible for tenure.[8]

Unfortunately, many colleges receive insufficient preventive legal advice and are usually at "ground zero" in the development of legally sufficient part-time faculty policies and procedures. At a community College in the East, where the percentage of part-time faculty members has increased 47 percent, virtually matching the percentage of growth in part-time students over the past four years, the insufficient attention given to certain legal questions was brought to the College's attention as a result of a problem last year with a young part-time faculty member.

Just before the Fall semester opened, one department hired a graduate student to teach an introductory course. The contract signed by the instructor had no termination clause. When numerous complaints were received about the instructor's teaching, the division chairman went to the instructor's classroom to talk with the students, and found the situation so bad that he decided, with the concurrence of the Associate Dean, to relieve the instructor of his duties immediately. The instructor sought legal counsel, who advised that since the contract contained no termination clause, and since the College had given no opportunity for due process, he (the instructor) should sue the College for defamation of his character, if, in fact, he was formally discharged from his teaching responsibilities. The contract appointing the instructor had stated a

definite rank for a specified period of time. Rather than go to court, the College decided to pay the instructor for the rest of the semester and remove any mention of termination from his record. The College determined that, although it could provide evidence of the instructor's lack of ability to teach, it had not provided him with any warning prior to his suspension from the classroom. It had accorded him no review, either. Furthermore, there was a question as to whether the contract was binding because it had not been signed by the President of the College.

Simultaneous with the incident discussed above, members of the full-time faculty of the same institution were beginning to complain about the failure of the College to maintain the same ratio of part and full-time faculty members that it had held in its early years. It became incumbent upon the administration to develop a comprehensive policy statement on the part-time faculty, something it had never done before. This policy was developed in conjunction with a revised part-time faculty handbook which described the contractual obligations of the part-time faculty member together with institutional role expectations for part-timers.

The College's new policy on part-time instructors had to consider four points raised by the dismissal case mentioned above, because all were common in termination cases: 1) the authority to make contracts; the contract signed by the instructor was not countersigned by a high level official of the College; 2) implications of contractual obligations of public versus private institutions; 3) due process requirements; in the case mentioned above, the instructor was given no opportunity for review of the case presented against him; 4) the instructor's First Amendment rights.[9]

Traditionally, part-time faculty members have been thought of as "moonlighters" but the exclusivity of this concept is under challenge. One of the

strongest advocates of an expanded notion of part-time teaching is the feminist movement, which proposes that part-time employees be given all of the benefits, opportunities, and responsibilities that they would receive as full-time employees. Their proposal would be, in effect, a compromise between those who see part-time employment as exploitation and those who claim it is necessary because of financial exigency. In addition to "moonlighter" part-time appointments, feminist groups would like to see "sunlight" part-time appointments. These would be "regular faculty appointments, alike in every way to full-time faculty, except the amount of time worked. These persons receive pro-rated fringe benefits, committee assignments, advises, tenure and sabbatical accrual."[10] Purportedly, this kind of appointment would benefit working parents, and would enhance the professionalism of part-time faculties.

Advocates of better part-time faculty contracts are aware that there is a potential for sex discrimination in part-time hiring. They are also cognizant that Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Equal Pay Act, Title IX of Education Amendments of the 1972 and Executive Order 11246 all prohibit discrimination in employment.[11] Compliance with these laws is another reason why institutions should consider implementing revised part-time faculty employment policies.

A "Fairness Doctrine" for the hiring of part-time professors should be subscribed to by institutions of higher education. "Market realities" -- a surplus of qualified, "hungry" teachers combined with contracting budgets -- militate against the refinement of part-time appointments as described above, but for the good of both students and the profession, faculty and administrators should work toward a rational policy for hiring part-time instructors. Institutions should develop policies regarding part-time faculties; and they

should work toward eliminating the abuses which have become traditional at certain institutions and in some departments (e.g., the traditional hiring of the chairman's friends). Part-time faculty contracts should be drawn up by a lawyer. A due process system should be developed for use in termination cases, and this should include a fair evaluation and adequate warning of impending termination.

An interesting analysis of part-time faculty contracts has been made by a former community college dean in Maryland. One of the points in his analysis is that institutions should include a statement in the contract that time spent as a part-time employee will not be used toward tenure. He also warns that institutions should not offer more than 49 percent of a full-time position to a part-time instructor. A good contract would include the following in addition to a statement of dates, times and salary:

1. A statement of reference to a "policies and procedures" manual;
2. An indication that the contract does not provide for future commitment or priority;
3. A statement that part-time instructors must meet standards of performance;
4. A statement that all requirements that must be met by the instructor;
5. A stipulation of advising and office hour requirements;
6. A statement making clear the instructor's obligation with regard to grading policy and submission of grades.[12]

Effective Utilization of Part-Timers

Having given some consideration to legal and administration issues, institutions can devote more attention to the effective utilization of part-time instructors. It is important that administrations, if they are to be successful in improving the quality of performance of their part-time instructors,

seek the involvement of full-time faculty members. Part-time faculty should be incorporated, to the greatest extent possible, into the "mainstream" of the academic process. One of the outcomes of increasing the integration of part-time faculty with the rest of the institution is the potential for increased student retention. In dealing with the financial problems caused by decreasing enrollment, institutions are increasingly turning their attention from exclusive focus on student recruitment to the problem of student retention, and an effective part-time faculty can play an important role in ensuring that students do not drop out because of frustration with "the system."

Several fallacies and misconceptions regarding part-time teaching point up the need for further research, however, because it is too convenient to use that body of individuals as a scapegoat in the matter of student attrition. Are part-time teachers only in it for the money? Surveys indicate that this is true for only a small percentage of them. Do part-time faculty members give more high grades? There is some evidence that they do; however, this may indicate the institution's failure to impart grading standards to members of the part-time staff. The fact that part-timers teach more adult students may also have a bearing on this situation. Do they neglect the advising role of the teacher? If they do, it may be because we as institutions have not provided them with the means of improving the quality of their service to the students.

At Essex Community College, in Baltimore County, Maryland, a College-wide retention committee concluded that one of the causes of student attrition was the fact that part-time faculty made inadequate use of college resources and infrequently referred students with problems to appropriate college offices for help. The student retention committee recommended that the office of the Dean

of Instruction look more closely at student attrition in classes taught by part-time faculty and attempt to develop an orientation and follow-up program for part-time teachers which would better enable them to use College resources and to identify and refer students with problems.

The Dean's staff, in dealing with the retention committee's recommendations, recognized that there were many other aspects of part-time instruction which could be causes of student attrition (e.g., part-time faculty recruitment and selection procedures, the quality of part-time teaching, limited interaction between part-time and full-time faculty members, etc.). The staff also considered the fact that only limited results could be achieved in a single orientation session. Although multiple sessions might be useful, part-time contracts do not contain an obligation to participate in such sessions, nor could the College afford to provide incentive through additional pay. Furthermore, part-time faculty usually hold full-time jobs in other locations, so scheduling of orientation sessions would be extremely difficult. The problem was complicated and deserved a rational plan for the improvement of instruction for part-time faculty.

The plan, developed by the Dean's staff, evolved from the needs of the institution with the primary need being maximizing the quality of teaching. The plan, therefore, involved the following components:

1. Obtaining useful data on the effectiveness of part-time instruction.
2. Making the faculty and administrative staff aware of the problem and seeking their involvement.
3. Helping the part-time faculty to use the system of resources available to them by providing adequate orientation and follow-up.
4. Bringing about interaction between full-time and part-time faculty.
5. An on-going program of support for the part-time faculty.

Component one is preliminary because there is insufficient data in many institutions about the amount of time spent in advisement; about the number of referrals to counseling made by part-time vis a vis full-time faculty; about the number of referrals to remedial programs; about the use of instructional technology and the library; about the number of high grades given by part-time faculty, and so forth.

The second important step an institution must take is to make its own faculty and staff aware of problems with part-time faculty. One of the dangers of having a central office administer part-time faculty is that there is virtually no contact with individuals and departments with whom the part-time faculty member should be associating. Decentralization, the involvement of the divisions and departments in the hiring, orientation, and evaluation of instructors, can be especially helpful.

The most important component of a plan for the use of part-time faculty is to enable them to use the system of resources we already have set up for the use of full-time faculty. This component involves an orientation program, a set of written policies and procedures, and a sufficient amount of space and equipment for them to do an adequate job of advising students.

The orientation program strives to increase awareness of teaching methodologies and informs members of the part-time faculty how they can go about using the College's resources. Whether general faculty orientation meetings followed by divisional meetings is more satisfactory or whether departmental meetings alone, with the use of materials developed by the administration works better, each institution must decide. In either case, a structured orientation and follow-up is critical.

One of the most important affects of the orientation meeting is the in-

creased interaction between members of the full and part-time faculties. Institutions which have grown too large must personalize the process so that part-time faculty members will begin to identify themselves with a department or division of the college. The exchange of information among faculty members will be helpful in teaching.

An on-going program of support for the part-time faculty will be much easier if the other components of the plan are fulfilled. What we are really saying is that we can no longer afford to treat part-time faculties as mere adjuncts. We must begin to regard part-time faculty members as professional educators, even if their primary allegiance is to another profession. They must be allowed to develop professionally, just as we expect our full-time faculty members. To do this, they must be permitted access to the "system," and encouraged to utilize it to improve the job they are doing.

"Mainstreaming" the part-time faculty is no longer an issue; it is an imperative. Part-time instruction cannot and should not replace instruction by full-time scholars. Rather, it should be an extension of the full-time faculty's activity, enhancing and reinforcing the goals of the full-time faculty. The role of the part-time faculty should be carefully spelled out by institutions so that use of such persons cannot abuse the profession of college teaching or debase the quality of collegiate instruction. The part-time faculty is here to stay, so it must be made part of the mainstream of the instructional effort in our colleges and universities. Part-time teachers, like full-time instructors, are professional educators with an important role to play in higher education.

FOOTNOTES

[1]James Real, "Coast Community College: The Learning Society, California Style," Change Vol. X (March, 1978), 23-27.

[2]Jack Magarrell, "Part-Time Professors on the Increase," Chronicle of Higher Education Vol. XV (January 16, 1978), p. 1.

[3]Ibid., p. 16.

[4]Leslie Koltai, "King Solomon and the Bowl of Spaghetti," Junior and Community College Journal Vol. 48 (September, 1977), p. 20.

[5]"Increasing Use of Part-Time Condemned by Teachers' Union," Chronicle of Higher Education Vol. XV (September 6, 1977), p. 4.

[6]Magarrell, Ibid.

[7]Robert L. Williams, The Administration of Academic Affairs in Higher Education (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), p. 80.

[8]Koltai, Ibid.

[9]Harold J. Rood,"Legal Issues in Faculty Termination," Journal of Higher Education Vol. XLVIII (March/April, 1977), p. 124.

[10]"Part-Time Faculty Employment, Project on the Status and Education of Women," Association of American Colleges (May, 1976), p. 2.

[11]"Part-Time Faculty Employment, Project on the Status and Education of Women," Association of American Colleges (May, 1976), p. 2.

[12]Roger A. Winkle, former Dean of Harford Community College, Belair, Maryland, "Analysis of Part-Time Contract Information," (July 18, 1978), distributed to Community College Deans in Maryland.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges
96 Powell Library Building
University of California
Los Angeles, California 90024

NOV 30 1979